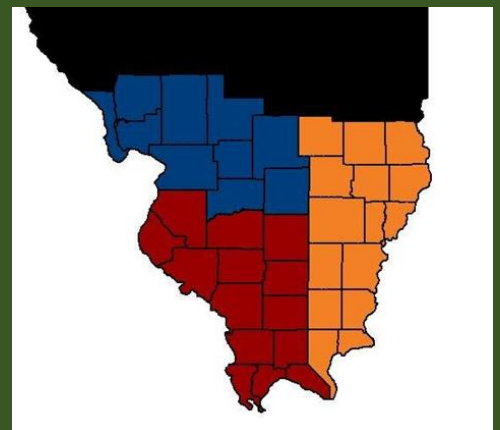


2025

Human Services Transportation Plan for Region 9



*IL. Department of Transportation/Office of
Intermodal Project Implementation and
South Central Illinois Regional Planning and
Development Commission*

1/1/2025

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Mission Statement

To coordinate the human service transportation efforts of public, private, and non-profit providers to eliminate duplication and maximize services across the region.

Introduction and Executive Summary

In 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law by President George W. Bush. It guaranteed funding for various transportation projects including highways, highway safety, public transportation, and human services transportation. Under SAFETEA-LU, all grantees receiving Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities, Section 5316: Job Access and Reverse Commute Program, Section 5317: New Freedom Program were required to participate in a locally developed coordinated public transit human service transportation plan (HSTP) to be eligible for transportation funding for federal fiscal year 2007 and beyond. Since then, the HSTP program has been continued by each transportation bill as a means of enhancing access and quality through coordination.

In 2012, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) was signed into law by President Obama replacing the SAFETEA-LU. MAP-21 is the first long-term highway authorization enacted since 2005 and authorized \$105 billion for fiscal years 2013 and 2014. MAP-21 provided funding highway infrastructure, public transportation projects, and reaffirmed the statute mandating local coordination of transportation services. Some of the SAFETEA-LU programs were repealed in MAP-21; JARC funding was absorbed into Section 5307: Urbanized Area Formula Grants and Section 5311: Formula Grants for Rural Areas. The New Freedom funding was rolled into Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities.

In 2015, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) was signed into law by President Obama replacing the MAP-21. The FAST Act authorized \$305 billion for highways, public transportation, rail, research, etc. for fiscal years 2016 through 2020. This is the first federal law in over a decade to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation programs. Replacing MAP-21, the FAST Act maintained focus on safety, maintained the established structure of the various highway-related programs, and continued efforts to streamline project delivery. It also revived Section 5339: Grants for Bus and Bus Facilities Program, which is available to Section 5307 and Section 5311 recipients.

In 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law by President Biden replacing the FAST Act. The law authorized \$1.2 trillion for transportation and infrastructure for fiscal years 2021 through 2026. This is the largest federal investment in public transportation in the nation's history. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula grant programs experienced a 30% increase in funding from fiscal years 2021 and 2022 and will continue increasing through 2026. Which means that "local match" funding required to leverage these funds will also need to grow 30%. If local match dollars are not met, leftover funds will be returned to the State. Service contracts with stakeholder

agencies such as human service agencies, Medicaid brokers/MCO's, nursing homes, community colleges, etc. can be utilized as local match. The IJA continues the requirement for the coordination of transportation services.

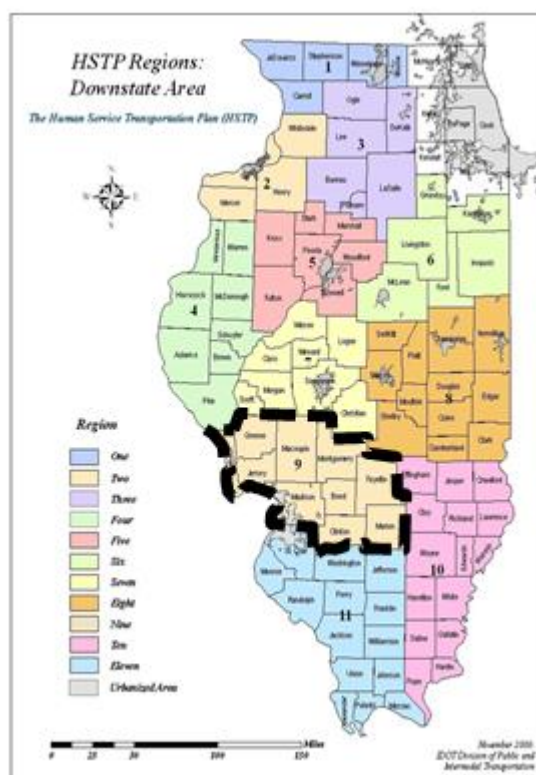
Purpose of the Human Service Transportation Plan

A coordinated plan maximizes the programs' collective coverage by minimizing duplication of services. Further, a coordinated plan is developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation, as well as human services providers and the public. A coordinated plan incorporates activities offered under other programs sponsored by Federal, State, and local agencies to greatly strengthen its impact. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) also encourages participation in coordinated service delivery as long as the coordinated services will continue to meet the purpose of all programs.

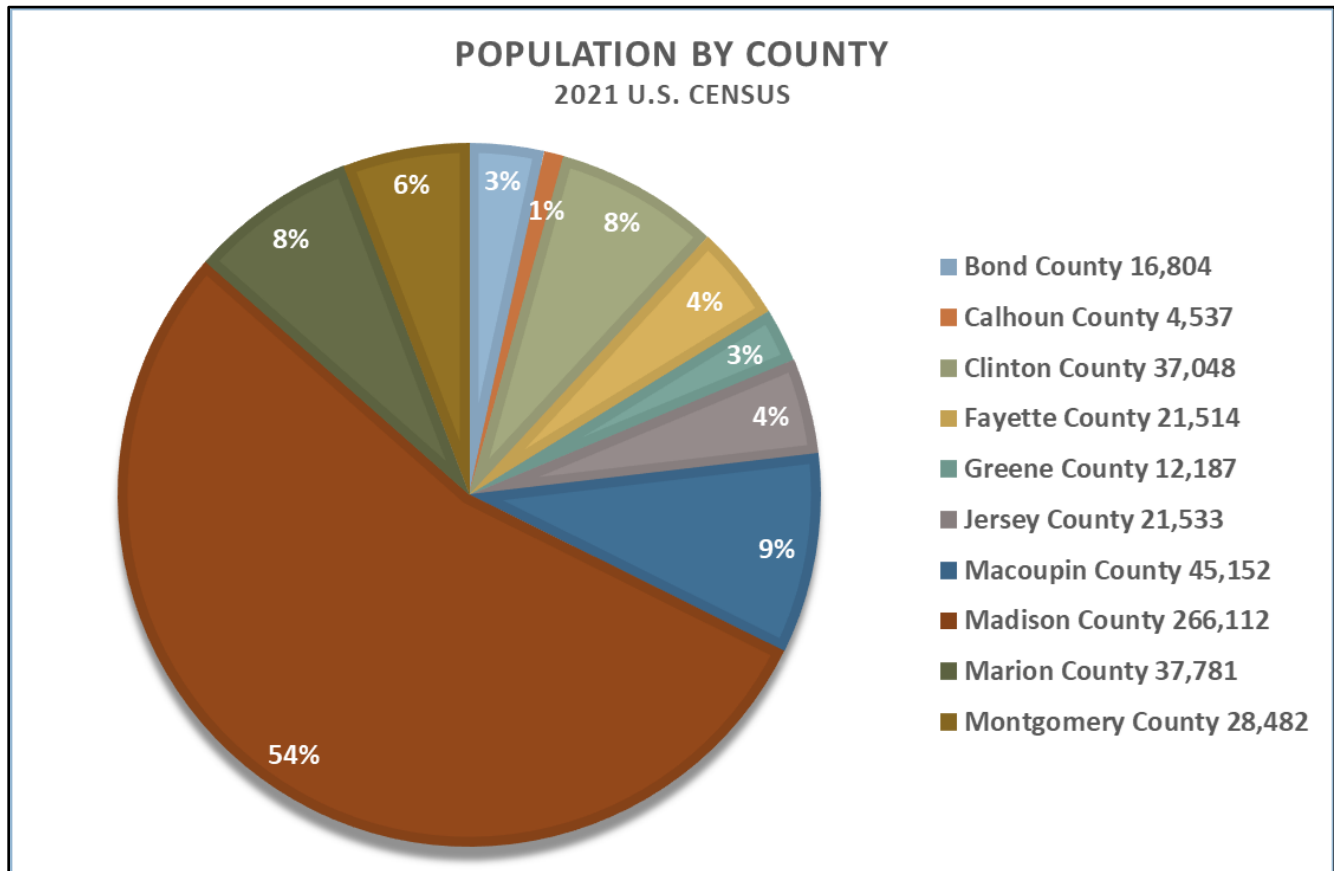
Regional Description

Region 9 is one of eleven downstate Human Services Transportation Planning Regions established by the State of Illinois Department of Transportation, through the Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation (DPIT), now known as the Office of Intermodal Project Implementation (OIPI). The region is comprised of ten counties located along the western half of South-Central Illinois stretching from the Mississippi river to the middle of the state. The region contains the counties immediately to the north and east of the Metropolitan St. Louis region. These counties are: Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Fayette, Greene, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison, Marion and Montgomery.

Of the approximately 491,150 residents of Region 9, over half, 266,112, live in Madison County, many of whom fall under the direction of the East-West Gateway Council of Governments Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan for the Metropolitan St. Louis region. Outside of the urbanized portion of Madison County, Region 9 is rural in character, typified by large areas of agriculture with small communities interspersed. Major highways such as I-55 and I-70 shape the region, bringing travelers through the region and providing access to the St. Louis Metro area. The charts below highlight the population of the counties within Region 9.

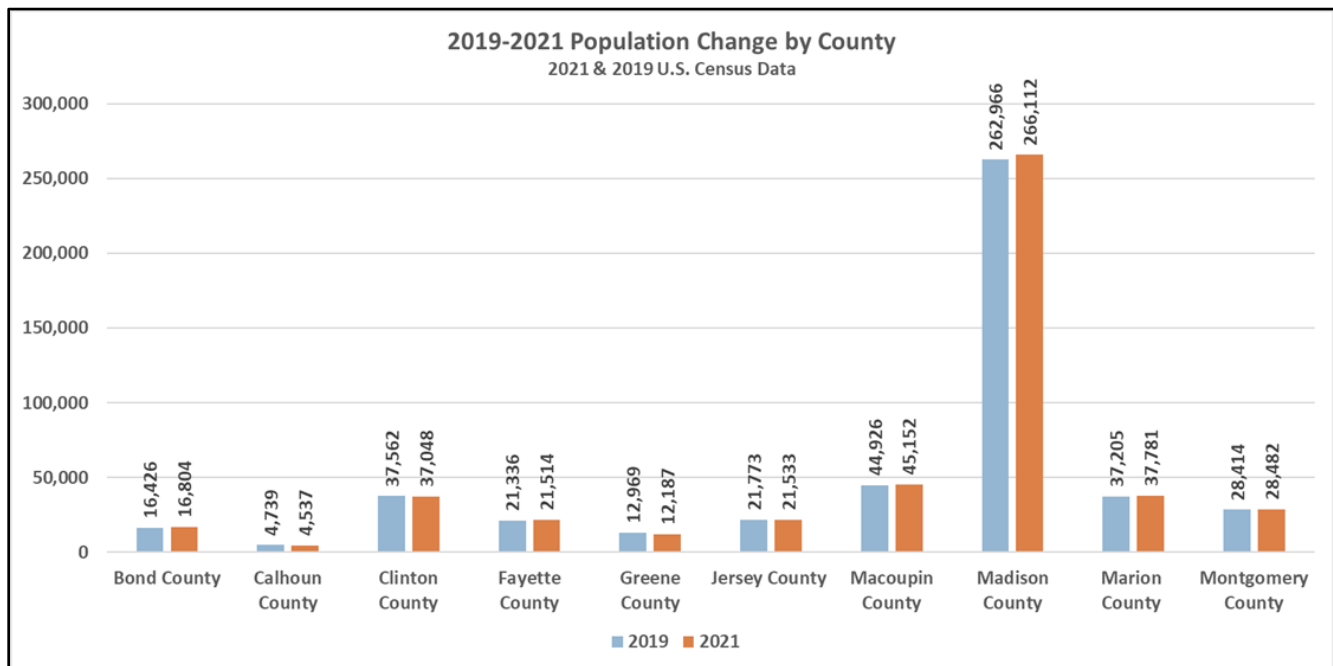


Total Population by County:



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-a)

Total Population Change by County:



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-a) and U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-b)

Regional Demographic Information

The populations of the nine Counties in Region 9, outside of Madison County, are predominantly rural in character. Most of the rural population is clustered around routes into the St. Louis Metropolitan Region. In Clinton County, there is a chain of towns both along Illinois Highway 161 and US Highway 50 that attract small businesses and tourism and, to a lesser degree, U.S. Highway 67 which extends north from Alton towards Macomb and the Quad Cities. The region also includes a stretch of I-70 which extends northeast from St. Louis towards Indianapolis. I-255 and I-270 run through Madison County and intersect with I-55 which reaches north through Macoupin and Montgomery counties to Springfield and south to Missouri.

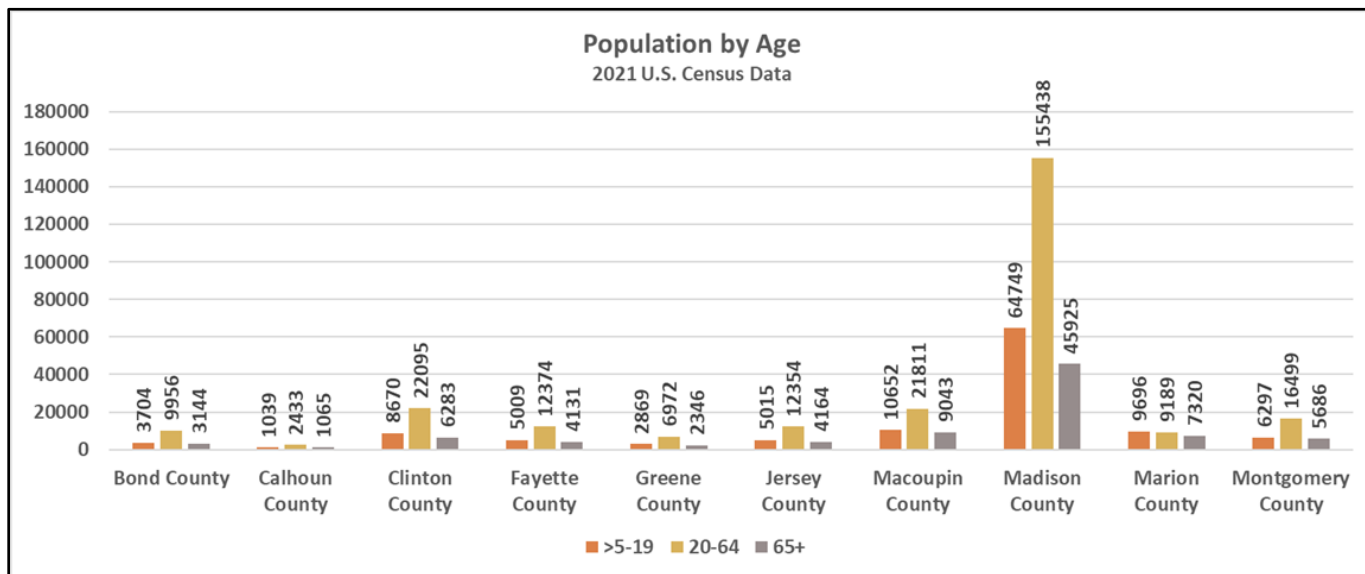
The majority of the population is in the 20-64 age range with a large amount of people commuting into the Metro and St. Louis area for employment, shopping, medical and social/recreational activities, hence the need for major public transportation hubs and linkages.

As in a lot of rural communities, poverty is high. Reliable personal transportation is not always an option for many and they depend on their local transit agency to offer a reasonably priced fare option to meet transportation needs.

The disability rates are quite high throughout the region and continues to trend upward as the population age increases, namely in Calhoun, Marion, and Madison Counties. Calhoun County is possibly the most rural of all the counties and has only recently had public transportation available.

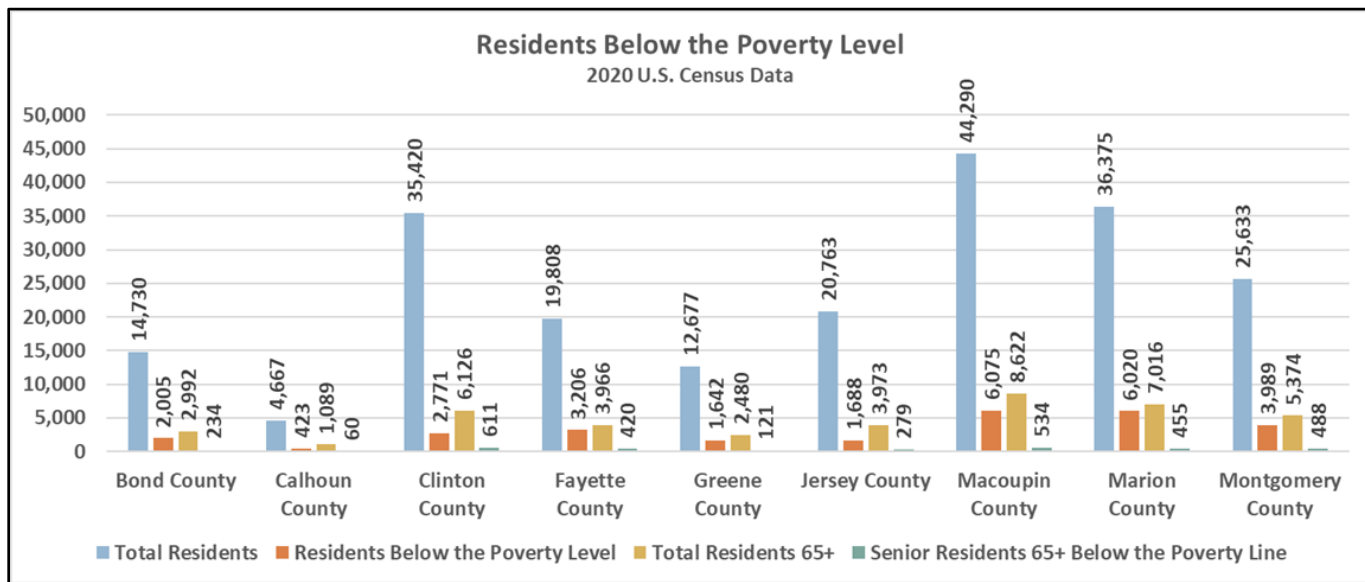
Accessible transportation is essential in assisting the disabled community to medical appointments, as well as meeting daily needs. The charts below break down the diverse population of Region 9.

Total Population by Age:



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-a)

Population Above and Below the Poverty Line:



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-c)

The poverty level is determined by a household's income. If a household's income is below the federal poverty threshold, then the household is considered low income. Rather than list every county

in Region 9's poverty level for households of different sizes, averages have been calculated for all ten counties in the region and can be seen below.

- 1 person: \$41,645
- 2 people: \$47,570
- 3 people: \$53,535
- 4 people: \$59,450

Disability Population:

	>5-17 years		18-64 years		65+ years	
	Total Population	Residents with a Disability	Total Population	Residents with a Disability	Total Population	Residents with a Disability
Bond	3,048	161 (5%)	9,354	1,379 (15%)	2,922	1,199 (41%)
Calhoun	903	68 (8%)	2,474	437 (18%)	1,018	429 (42%)
Clinton	7,894	341 (4%)	21,023	2,514 (12%)	6,241	2,260 (36%)
Fayette	4,332	128 (3%)	12,033	1,999 (17%)	6,833	1,578 (23%)
Greene	2,585	192 (7%)	6,866	954 (14%)	2,313	907 (39%)
Jersey	4,196	286 (7%)	12,909	1,545 (12%)	4,030	1,305 (32%)
Macoupin	9,331	387 (4%)	26,143	3,516 (14%)	8,975	3,078 (34%)
Madison	55,493	2992 (5%)	158,359	21,301 (14%)	47,573	17,749 (37%)
Marion	8,772	520 (6%)	21,118	3,409 (16%)	6,994	2,771 (40%)
Montgomery	5,665	180 (3%)	14,960	2,326 (16%)	5,502	2,021 (37%)
Region Total	102,219	4,685 (5%)	311,382	39,380 (13%)	92,401	33,297 (36%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.-d)

Regional Transportation Committee (RTC) Make-Up

The primary purpose of the RTC is to discuss mobility management and coordination issues of the region. These issues can come from the results of needs assessments, updates on the progress of the Regional Plan that address service gaps, the HSTP Coordinator directing assistance to ride-seekers, etc. Committee members and other attendees are encouraged to bring any transportation service gaps or community need that they have identified. The committee is also tasked with reviewing and recommending applications for funding for Section 5310 Consolidated Vehicle Procurement (CVP) program, as well as discussion of the program and vehicle issues. The RTC role is vital to ensure that the planning process is reflective of the needs of local transit operators, the general public in Region 9, and the surrounding area. Meetings are held quarterly throughout the region and hosted by committee members on a voluntary basis.

Levels of Participation

As part of any application endorsement process, agencies applying for various IDOT funds must participate in the Regional Committee meetings, as a coordinating entity, throughout the year. There are various levels of participation that an agency can achieve. This level system will be used by the HSTP Coordinator(s) when evaluating and scoring any agency applying for vehicle funds (5310 Consolidated Vehicle Procurement). Agencies designated as Inactive will be removed from consideration for funding.

Leadership Participant: An agency representative that routinely volunteers' leadership, data, and resources to coordination planning and service provision and attends all quarterly HSTP Committee meetings.

Active Participant: An agency representative that routinely meets committee requests with data, information and resources in the development of strategic planning and attends all quarterly HSTP Committee meetings.

Participant: An agency representative that regularly attends planning meetings only.

Inactive: An agency representative that does not currently participate in meetings, planning, or service provision.

Transportation Service Providers

Public Transportation Providers:

- Bond County Transit
 - Service Area: **Bond** County
- Central Illinois Public Transit
 - Service Area: Christian, Clay, Effingham, **Fayette**, **Montgomery**, Moultrie, and Shelby County
- Macoupin County Transit
 - Service Area: **Macoupin** County
- Madison County Transit and Agency for Community Transit
 - Service Area: **Madison** County
- South Central Transit
 - Service Area: **Clinton**, Franklin, Jefferson, **Marion**, Perry, and Washington County
- Tri-County Rural Transit
 - Service Area: **Calhoun**, **Greene**, and **Jersey** County

Human Service and 5310 Transportation Providers:

- Beverly Farm Foundation
 - Located In: Godfrey (Madison Co.)
- Challenge Unlimited
 - Located In: Alton (Madison Co.)
- Community Link
 - Located In: Breese (Clinton Co.)
- FAYCO Enterprises
 - Located In: Vandalia (Fayette Co.)
- Illinois Valley Rehab of Gillespie
 - Located In: Gillespie (Macoupin Co.) and Jerseyville (Jersey Co.)
- Macoupin Center for Developmentally Disabled
 - Located In: Carlinville (Macoupin Co.)
- Marion County Horizon Center
 - Located In: Salem (Marion Co.)
- Residential Options
 - Located In: Alton (Madison Co.)
- Senior Services Plus
 - Located In: Alton (Madison Co.)
- Village of Glen Carbon/Glen Carbon Senior Center
 - Located In: Glen Carbon (Madison Co.)

Other Transportation Providers:

- Amtrak
 - Located In: Centralia (Marion Co.), Alton (Madison Co.), Carlinville (Macoupin Co.)
- Faith In Action
 - Located In: Edwardsville/Glen Carbon (Madison Co.), Collinsville (Madison Co.)
- Friends Van of St. Joseph's Hospital
 - Located In: Alhambra (Madison Co.), Albers (Clinton County), Aviston (Clinton Co.), Bartelso (Clinton Co.), Beckmeyer (Clinton Co.), Breese (Clinton Co.), Carlyle (Clinton Co.), Damiansville (Clinton Co.), Germantown (Clinton Co.), Highland (Madison Co.), Grantfork (Madison Co.), Keysport (Bond and Clinton Co.), Marine (Madison Co.), New Baden (Clinton Co.), Pierron (Bond and Madison Co.), Pocahontas (Bond Co.), St. Jacob (Madison Co.), St. Rose (Clinton Co.), Trenton (Clinton Co.), Troy (Madison Co.)
- JewelRide
 - Located In: Edwardsville (Madison Co.)

- Rural Med
 - Located In: Farina (Fayette and Marion Co.)
- United Medical Response
 - Located In: Salem (Marion Co.), Centralia (Marion and Clinton Co.)
- Riverbend Taxi Airport & Medical Transportation
 - Located In: Collinsville (Madison Co.)

Coordination Efforts and Successes from Previous Plan

Coordination of transportation efforts in most rural areas of Illinois, including Sub-state Region 9, has been, at best, limited and only on a local scale. The HSTP process represents the first real effort to coordinate transportation services on a regional scale. Prior to the beginning of the HSTP planning process, any coordination was done informally between service providers or agencies who require transportation for their clients. The Regional Plan was developed to promote a more managed effort for all providers of transportation to coordinate trips, services, funding, etc.

Regional Coordination Success

Gap 1 – Staff Shortages and Increasing Cost of Doing Business

- Goal – Hire and retain drivers and schedulers. Improve day-to-day operating issues.
- Strategies:
 1. Keeping wages and benefits at a competitive rate.
 2. Recruitment – advertising & community involvement.
 3. Improving work environments.
- Accomplishments:
 - ✓ Agencies have worked towards increasing their minimum wage/offering competitive wages. Starting wage for drivers: CIPT is \$16.28, Bond County is \$14, Glen Carbon is \$18. Agencies have been slowly raising the minimum wage for drivers to keep wages at a competitive rate.
 - ✓ CIPT/CEFS has been going to job fairs (in Vandalia and Effingham) and advertising their strengths as an employer to potential drivers. Madison County Transit has been sending a hiring bus into the public to recruit people who may not otherwise know about transit jobs available. They have been setting up at local movie theaters and handed out applications. This is being done to address the driver shortage. Bond County Transit has increased their social media presence for recruitment, hiring, and community support.
 - ✓ CIPT/CEFS has been hiring drivers and promoting drivers to dispatchers/schedulers since they are experienced and already know the routes.

Gap 2 – Improve the Relationship and Coordination Between Transit Providers

- Goal – Improve coordination between transportation providers.
- Strategies:
 1. Advocate for shareable software
 2. Work with other transit providers to train schedulers on coordination.
 3. Advocate with RTAC on schedulers training that would benefit coordination efforts.
- Accomplishments:
 - ✓ Central Illinois Public Transit (CIPT) and South Central Transit (SCT) and Bond County Transit (BCT) have worked together with Fayco and Community Link to provide driver and other trainings as requested.
 - ✓ Glen Carbon Senior Center will refer clients to other transit agencies in the region for medical trips if they cannot make the trip happen.
 - ✓ Madison County Transit recently started providing transportation to take riders from Beverly Farm Foundation to employment training.
 - ✓ Illinois was awarded \$1.8 million from the Federal Transit Administration to launch a pilot program in Southern Illinois. The goal is to integrate trip scheduling and fare collection across 20 counties. South Central Transit is one of the agencies participating. The initial goal is to create better links among the four transit providers' schedules and transfer locations to make it easier for riders to travel beyond the limits of their transit districts. The larger mission is to eventually integrate fare collection and improve the coordination of public funding for transit throughout the region, relieving riders of the burden of arranging fares and payments.

Gap 3 – Lack of Transportation for Medical Services

- Goal – Improve communications with medical facilities regarding Non-Emergency Medical Transportation.
- Strategies:
 1. Transit providers can contact local hospitals, medical facilities, behavioral health clinics, etc. to inform them of transportation services and costs.
 2. Scheduling issues could be discussed so that a patient/client that is a known transit user would get scheduling assistance that would benefit all.
- Accomplishments:
 - ✓ SCT has a service contract with a local hospital to provide medical trips.
 - ✓ CIPT has received a grant (ARISE) that has allowed the agency to employ a medical scheduler. This person will work with riders that have specific medical transportation needs/issues to work the trip between CIPT service times and the medical facilitator. The staff person will also work to inform medical facilities in the area of the transportation

- that is offered in the various areas of transit district. CIPT reports that medical trips are improving since the medical scheduler has been employed.
- ✓ Bond County is now providing medical trips to its riders into Glen Carbon and Edwardsville once a month.
 - ✓ MCT has partnered with Chestnut Health Systems (a private, not-for-profit organization), to offer support to the riders of MCT. Chestnut Health Systems has deployed behavioral health teams at MCT transfer stations and on MCT buses in Madison County. The goal is to engage riders, conduct screenings, and link riders to necessary services, including mental health, substance use, primary medical care, as well as community and recovery supports.

Needs Assessment

The identification of the gaps and needs is paramount to the transportation plan as well as the ongoing effort to improve the system for the community, riders, and the transportation providers. The following is not an exhaustive list but represents conclusions drawn based on the survey results and conversations from HSTP meetings. These surveys were disseminated by the HSTP Coordinators and the Region 9 HSTP committee members in the summer of 2024. This list seeks to provide direction for funding and efforts to improve the current transportation system and any agency providing or purchasing transportation for clients should consider this plan and its objectives when making decisions affecting transportation services.

Each identified gap represents an area for improvement within the existing transportation system. All organizations which provide transportation are urged to use the strategies listed to work towards meeting the gaps and needs. Any agency that plans on requesting grant money to provide transportation or agencies that may request grant money in the future should take into account strategies and methods of coordination (which involve communication, service, and possible resources). Requests for federal funding from Sections 5310, 5311, or other governmental funds which meet the needs outlined below will receive a more favorable score than projects which do not address an identified gap in service. With each gap, there is a goal, a strategy or strategies to mitigate and/or close the gap.

- **Community:** The community survey results include input from a diverse group of individuals. Community members 20-80+ years of age responded to the survey. 66% of those surveyed have a disability that impacts their ability to drive. Overall, 60% of those surveyed report that there are places they cannot go due to lack of transportation. The results show that there is a strong need for transportation to medical appointments, shopping, social/entertainment, and work. The hours of service needed are Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Survey results show that 54% prefer door-to-door demand response

service and 34% prefer curb-to-curb demand response service. Locations that community members would like to go in Illinois are Alton, Edwardsville, Maryville, Glen Carbon, Litchfield, Carbondale, Effingham, Fairview Heights, etc. In Missouri, St. Louis. There is a strong desire for public transportation to get community members to appointments, work, shopping, etc. on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.

- **Riders:** The rider surveys reflect a similar demographic to the community surveys. People ages 18-60+ responded to the survey. 57% of those surveyed have a physical disability. The survey results show there is a need for transportation related to medical, shopping, social/recreational, work, etc. on a weekly, daily, and monthly basis. To riders, the greatest barriers to transportation are hours of operation, advance notice needed to request a ride, and lack of information about transportation options. On a positive note, 86% of those surveyed state they are able to travel everywhere they would like to within their community and 98% of those surveyed are satisfied/very satisfied with their service. Riders report an overall good service with friendly, dependable drivers, and good on-time performance.
- **Agency:** The agency survey results came from agencies that provide services for seniors, persons with disabilities, the general public, low-income persons, etc. A majority of the agencies surveyed operate transportation directly, contract with a transportation provider to service clients, or the staff provides client transportation. The agency surveys reflect a need for expanded hours of operation, expanded service outside of town, better coordination between service providers, and affordability of service. 83% of the agencies surveyed say there are unmet needs in their community. The survey results show there is a need for transportation for shopping, medical inside and outside of the county, religious, entertainment, social service appointments, family/friend visits, etc. Times of service most needed are Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on a daily, monthly, and as needed basis. Locations that agencies reported their clients would most like to go within the region are Gillespie, Greenville, Bartelso, Edwardsville, etc. 75% of agencies need medical transportation outside of the county. Survey respondents report needing medical transportation to Montgomery Co., Sangamon Co., Madison Co., and Clinton Co. in Illinois. In Missouri, St. Louis.

Identification of Service Gaps and Needs/Strategies and Actions

Gap #1 – Riders have difficulties accessing transportation within their county, outside the county they reside in, and outside of the service area of their transportation provider.

- **Goal** – To get the rider where they need to go within their counties, outside of their counties, and connect them to other transportation agencies when transportation is needed to get them outside of the service area that the transportation provider covers.
- **Strategies:**

1. Coordinate transportation between transportation providers, plus the human service agencies to make out-of-county, in-county, and outside of transportation provider's service area trips happen. All 5310 vehicle recipients should work together regarding this strategy.
 2. All 5310 transportation providers can continue to do outreach for hiring by advertising and being involved with the community, keeping wages at a competitive rate, and implementing strategies to retain current staff. Staff shortages might be impacting the transportation provider's ability to provide in-county and out-of-county trips.
 3. As stated in the strategies of Gap #4: "Apply for vehicles in the upcoming 2025 CVP application process and future years if application is available."
- **Updates:**
 1. **June of 2025: IDOT CVP vehicles that were awarded in the 2022 grant cycle have been delivered/picked up by the agencies. These vehicles will be replacing the aging fleet. The HSTP Coordinators coordinated two meetings for the human service agencies with 5310 vehicles in HSTP Region 9, 10, and 11. The first meeting was hosted by Challenge Unlimited in Alton. The second was hosted by Clay County Rehab in Flora. The agencies have expressed interest in continuing these '5310 Meetings' on an annual basis. These meetings have yielded positive results and allowed the agencies to speak about a slew of transportation concerns and coordination efforts.**
 2. **December of 2025: Madison Co. Transit is offering free fares on fixed route service if you board a bus that has a fare box wrapped like a present in honor of the holidays. SCT is offering free rides on Tuesday in December on fixed route service.**
 3. **March of 2026: Madison Co. Transit is expanding their service area into Marine Township and Pin Oak Township. These townships were previously unserved by public transportation. Central Illinois Public Transit is providing free rides to the polls in all the counties they serve.**

Gap #2 – Community members need transportation for medical facilities, groceries, hair salons, church or other religious activities, social/entertainment, etc. on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.

- **Goal** – To improve community access to transportation to get where they need to go with an emphasis on the following towns; Breese, Greenville, Aviston, Trenton, Bartelso, Maryville, Gillespie, Carlinville, and St. Louis.
- **Strategies:**
 1. Extend hours of service. There is a need for transportation Monday through Sunday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
 2. As stated in the strategies of Gap #1: "Coordinate transportation between transportation providers, plus the human service agencies to make out-of-county, in-county, and

outside of the transportation provider's service area trip happen. All 5310 vehicle recipients should work together regarding this strategy." To add to this, transportation providers could work with human service agencies with 5310 vehicles that may be sitting during the day, evening, or weekend, to meet some of these transportation gaps. This goes both ways with the agencies. An agency with 5310 vehicles could provide a trip for a rider that cannot be provided by the public transportation agency if they have the staff and vehicle availability to make it happen.

- Service contracts could be altered/written in a way that allows for an understanding between two agencies to work together to transport riders.
- 3. As stated in the strategies of Gap #4: "Apply for vehicles in the upcoming 2025 CVP application process and future years if application is available."
- **Updates:**
 1. **March of 2025: Madison Co. Transit is expanding their microtransit service into Bethalto/Cottage Hill. The service will operate Monday through Saturday and is starting May 12th. They will also be expanding the microtransit service into an area known as Logistics Valley on March 11th and will operate Monday through Sunday. It is home to three warehouse parks: Gateway Commerce Park, Gateway Tradeport, and Lakeview Commerce Center. This is due to the I-270/IL-111 Interchange Reconstruction that will prohibit any direct Northbound or Southbound travel on the IL-111 between Chain of Rocks Road and under the I-270.**
 2. **September of 2025: Madison Co. Transit expanded their microtransit into Edwardsville. It operates Monday through Saturday 6:30 a.m. to 12 a.m. The Logistics Valley microtransit was discontinued. It has been replaced by a fixed-route shuttle service. MCT currently operates microtransit in Edwardsville, Collinsville, and Bethalto/Cottage Hills.**
 3. **December of 2025: Madison Co. Transit is operating microtransit to warming centers on nights when the weather is 20 degrees and below.**
 4. **March of 2026: Madison Co. Transit is expanding microtransit into Troy and Maryville. This service will operate Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This service connects residents in Maryville and Troy to Walmart in Glen Carbon.**

Gap #3 – For riders the greatest barriers to transportation are lack of information about transportation options and services, getting to designated bus stops, hours of operation, limited availability, advance notice required to schedule trips, on-time performance, and lack of communication between transit and riders in cases of delays.

- **Goal** – To improve communication between provider and rider.
- **Strategies:**

1. Customer Service training for Schedulers, Dispatchers, and Bus Drivers. Any employees that interact with riders should be able to effectively communicate the transportation services available to riders.
 2. Provide riders resource information such as: Rules of the Ride, the importance of being ready for bus pick-up, how to schedule a trip, schedules of city/county routes, how to file a complaint, fare costs, and availability of service.
 3. Increase outreach to riders through better use of media outlets. Offer materials on buses, at hospitals, local shopping centers, etc. that describe services available. Attend local events with brochures and staff to answer transportation questions.
- **Updates:**
 1. **March of 2025: Madison Co. Transit offers real-time bus tracking via text messages, mobile/online, call. Riders can sign up for automatic alerts of arrival updates, delays, detours, etc. Riders can also explore the routes; i.e. current location of buses, predicted arrival time, stop numbers, etc. They also have digital displays at certain stops and stations that show real time bus arrival information in Madison County. Central Illinois Public Transit is hosting a Community Transit Forum for Montgomery County via Zoom on March 24th to allow community members to discuss public transportation updates and needs/issues in your county.**

Gap #4 – Higher costs of doing business/limited funding and aging vehicles is negatively impacting the ability of transportation providers to provide transportation to their clients/service area and to other transportation provider’s service areas.

- **Goal** – To replace/maintain aging vehicles and advocate for a regular schedule to apply for vehicles and equipment needed to run a successful transit system.
- **Strategies:**
 1. Preventative maintenance is vital to keeping aging vehicles on the road. Due to gaps in CVP funding at times, it is of the utmost importance to stay on top of maintenance of vehicles.
 2. All 5310 transportation providers can continue to do outreach for hiring by advertising and being involved with the community, keeping wages at a competitive rate, and implementing strategies to retain current staff.
 3. Apply for vehicles in the upcoming 2025 CVP application process and future years if application is available. The lack of buses may be impacting the ability of a public transportation agency to travel outside of their service area and connect the rider to the service area of another transportation provider.
 4. Coordination scoring could impact whether the agency is awarded 5310 vehicles from IDOT in the CVP application process. It is encouraged that agencies coordinate/work together to positively impact their being awarded. This would also positively impact

ridership. Agencies should consider working together because of limited funding to help provide the trips that are needed.

- Agencies will report to their HSTP Coordinators any and all coordination efforts with human service agencies and public transportation agencies.

Gap #5 – Need for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) across Region 9 and into other regions. The results suggest that patients/riders are missing their medical appointments due to lack of accessible transportation.

- **Goal** – To advocate for transportation providers and the riders regarding NEMT concerns and issues, specifically with the Medicaid broker's and the Department of Health and Family Services (HFS).
- **Strategies:**
 1. Communicate with medical offices regarding transportation that is available and better their understanding of when transportation runs to improve on-time performance for pick-up and drop-off. When communicating with the medical offices, the public transportation provider can discuss scheduling issues that are impeding the ability to provide the trip to the patient/rider. It is understood that staff turnover at medical offices is an obstacle to ongoing communication with the medical provider.
 2. Educate riders and medical offices/providers on the difference between MCO trips and public transportation trips.
 3. Public transportation providers will continue to advocate on their own behalf with the MCO's to achieve financially appropriate outcomes that will not be detrimental to the agency. It is understood that it is difficult to negotiate trips with the MCO. The new Medicaid guidance allows the transportation provider to negotiate deadhead miles, no shows, etc. in the rate of the trip provided. It is important to keep this in mind when conversing with the MCO about the cost of the trip. It is important for everyone involved in Non-Emergency Medical Transportation to use your advocacy skills to inform brokers of the problems transportation providers and riders are experiencing regarding NEMT.
 4. HSTP Coordinators will continue to advocate for the transportation providers and the riders regarding NEMT, as well as providing resources regarding MCO's and NEMT at the quarterly region meetings.
- **Updates:**
 1. **November of 2025: The HSTP Coordinator's attended the Annual Transportation Meeting that is hosted every year by the Statewide Independent Living Council in Springfield. The Center's for Independent Living, HSTP Coordinators, IDOT, Dept. of Human Services, Healthcare and Family Services, and transportation providers were all in attendance. The HSTP Coordinators advocated for the transportation providers and riders regarding issues with Medicaid/MCOs and NEMT.**

- 2. After the Annual Transportation Meeting, Ryan Croke from the Governor's office reached out to the HSTP Coordinators and put us in contact with Jill Hayden from the Illinois Association of Medicaid Health Plans (IAMHP). Since then, the HSTP Coordinators have had several meetings with both parties to discuss issues with Medicaid/MCO's and NEMT. They have collected stories from human service agencies and public transit agencies in HSTP Regions 9, 10, and 11 and shared them with the group. This group is growing. Updates will be noted as things move forward.**
- 3. March of 2026: The HSTP Coordinators have made contact with a representative of the Il. Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services. She has been included in the NEMT discussions. She shared information on how a Medicaid recipient can make a Medicaid transportation complaint. The HSTP Coordinators have put the information in a flyer and are disseminating the flyer to interested parties. They may use this information to contact HFS directly with their Medicaid Transportation complaint. This may include issues such as difficulty scheduling their trip, challenges securing transportation to and from a doctor's appointment, transportation does not show up to pick a client up, or a non-accessible vehicle arriving for pickup.**

Mobility Management

Mobility Management is a service provided to assist local agencies and individuals to gain better access to transportation. The HSTP Coordinators along with staff, of most if not all public transportation agencies are working to advance the coordination within their regions and the State of Illinois. Given the right Mobility Management tools, citizens should be able to find the rides that they need as well as empowering those citizens on how to access and use the services offered in their communities.

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